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The President's Daily Brief

November 29, 1975

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November 29, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORTUGAL

Anti-Communist military leaders moved yesterday to bring much of the radical Portuguese press under direct government control--further indication that they intend to capitalize on their victory this week. The general staff has been running Portugal by fiat since martial law was declared a few days ago during the rebellion led by leftist paratroopers.

Following the forced resignation of Army Chief of Staff Fabiao and security chief Carvalho on Thursday, the management and editorial boards of eight newspapers and magazines, most of them dominated by the Communists or the far left, were dismissed. The general staff has announced that the publications will remain suspended until the government can appoint new administrators.

According to a decree issued yesterday, all labor contract negotiations will be suspended until the end of the year, and the government will define a wage policy aimed at eliminating large wage inequities. The decree apparently is intended to reverse recent wage concessions made by the government to Communist-led construction workers and to indicate that a program of economic stabilization will be coming.

Prime Minister Azevedo indicated last night that the state of emergency in the Lisbon military region will be lifted soon and that the government will resume its normal functions.

Other actions which reportedly are being considered include:

--Military action to end Communist-inspired occupation of farms in the south.

--Disarming of illegally armed civilians, possibly by means of a nationwide house-to-house search.

--A crackdown on foreign revolutionaries, mostly Latin Americans who, according to some reports, have formed an international brigade to assist Portuguese leftists.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SAUDI ARABIA

The Saudis have stated their intention to continue adherence to the Arab boycott against firms doing business with Israel, even if it jeopardizes their "special relationship" with Washington.

In a demarche to Ambassador Akins on Thursday, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud asked for clarification of your recent statements on US actions to fight foreign discriminatory practices. Prince Saud said that Saudi Arabia does not intend to relax its boycott rules in the absence of an Arab League decision--a stand that gives the Saudis little room for flexibility.

He was less specific about Riyadh's reluctance to grant visas to Jews. He reiterated the Saudi rationale for treating Jewish visa applicants with caution but noted that, in practice, most Jews who apply are admitted.

Saud said that Riyadh does not want to see its economic relations with the US harmed. He was nevertheless firm and unemotional, according to Ambassador Akins, in pointing out that the problems posed by recent US actions are of crucial importance to Saudi Arabia, and that his country has no intention of changing its policies.

The Saudi presentation was clearly designed to persuade the US not to push Riyadh too hard on these issues, and may have been deliberately overdrawn. Nevertheless, the Saudis show little inclination to compromise.

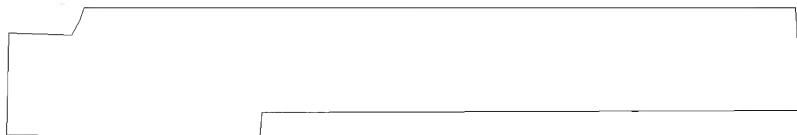
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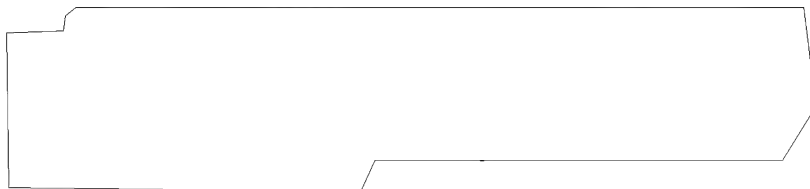
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LAOS

The communists are apparently ready to discard the facade of a coalition government. They launched a well-rehearsed campaign against it yesterday in Vientiane.

The communist party newspaper featured a speech by Pathet Lao cabinet member Khamouane Boupha calling for the replacement of the coalition with a "people's democratic government." Demonstrations began later in the day in several areas of Vientiane calling for the abolition of the coalition. One group of about 1,000 marched to the residence of Prime Minister Souvanna demanding his removal. Radio Pathet Lao also carried appeals from local revolutionary councils in several parts of the country requesting the dismantling of the coalition government.

Four days earlier, most of the remaining non-communist politicians in Vientiane were flown to the communist headquarters near Sam Neua, in northeastern Laos, ostensibly to attend a meeting of the coalition joint national political council. It is likely that they will be detained there indefinitely, joining other former ranking politicians and military officers in lengthy reindoctrination sessions.

Prime Minister Souvanna was hustled off to Luang Prabang on November 27--perhaps to prevent him from attempting to escape into exile. One of Souvanna's sons fled to Thailand when he learned that most non-communists had been flown to Sam Neua.

The communists have been laying the groundwork for Souvanna's retirement since last September, but the Prime Minister had expected to remain until the completion of national elections in April. Now the communists have apparently decided that they have neutralized all opposition and can effectively operate the government. They have the election process well under way throughout the country and see no reason to maintain the occasionally cumbersome coalition structure.

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Student violence in Turkey has spread to nearly every part of the country and could threaten Prime Minister Demirel's fragile coalition government.

Several deaths and numerous injuries have led to the temporary suspension of classes at universities and technical schools. The problem appears to have spread to secondary schools. Urged on by the press, government and opposition leaders have flailed ineffectually at each other on the subject.

The military leadership is doubtless watching the situation closely, particularly given its concern about renewed activities by the radical left. Earlier this month the chief of the general staff warned Demirel's government that the military could not tolerate continuing serious student violence.



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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ANGOLA

We present the precis of an inter-agency memorandum on short-term military and political prospects in Angola.

The prospects for Angola are bleak. The fighting shows every sign of continuing indefinitely. Neither the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) nor its adversaries--the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)--can hope to gain effective military control over all of Angola in the near term. Prospects for a political solution are equally remote, since at present there exists no basis for agreement among the three movements for participation in a government of national unity.

The military advantage in Angola already appears to be shifting once again in favor of the MPLA, largely owing to substantially increased foreign military assistance. Angola's strong ethnic and regional divisions, reflected in the three liberation movements and reinforced by the fighting among them, will make it exceedingly difficult for any one movement to gain effective political and military control over the entire country. Nevertheless, it may soon be possible for the MPLA to challenge the FNLA and UNITA in their ethnic strongholds in the north and south and to extend its military presence throughout much of the territory. Even so, the MPLA would continue to be threatened by serious political and military opposition, and its Luanda-based regime would be both politically and economically unstable, possibly for years to come.

Ideally, some kind of political solution could be found in which all three of Angola's liberation groups could participate in a government of national unity. The major obstacle to a government of national unity is the MPLA, which has arrogated to itself the role of Portugal's successor. It has been encouraged to maintain an uncompromising stand toward its rivals by the massive military and political support it is receiving from the Soviet Union and Cuba.

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The future of the FNLA and UNITA depends on their ability to force the MPLA, either militarily or politically, into accepting them into a government of national unity. While this seems to be UNITA's preferred option, it is less certain that the FNLA would even now be prepared to accept a power-sharing arrangement with the MPLA. Their ability to force a military stalemate depends in part on their obtaining continued military assistance on a par with that provided the MPLA by Moscow and Havana. Without this support FNLA-UNITA strength is likely to erode gradually, leaving them dependent on foreign political pressure to convince the MPLA to agree to a coalition government.

Equally important is the ability of the two movements, which have both suffered serious organizational weaknesses in the past, to survive the likely intensification of MPLA military pressure. Moreover, given the undercurrent of mistrust and suspicion that still exists between the FNLA and UNITA, their continued political and military cooperation cannot be counted as certain.

The MPLA's political dominance is by no means assured. The MPLA's African supporters have mounted a campaign to reverse the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) policy of neutrality toward Angola and gain OAU endorsement of the MPLA. The longer the fighting continues without a political solution in sight, the greater will be the pressure within the OAU to grant recognition to the MPLA in order to avoid protracted and acrimonious debate over the Angola problem, which has already placed severe strains on African unity.

Initially, Portugal's refusal to recognize either of the self-proclaimed "governments" in Angola influenced many non-African countries to remain neutral. Leftist pressures in Lisbon and "radical" African pressure on the OAU to recognize the MPLA continue, however. If Lisbon and the OAU, or even significant numbers of OAU members, recognize the MPLA regime, there will be little reason for other countries not to follow suit. If Lisbon refuses to extend recognition, its position eventually will become irrelevant--if it hasn't already--and more countries will look to the OAU for guidance on recognition.

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